

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5986

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELFAST

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, EI, UK (NI)

SUBJECT: REACTION TO SEPTEMBER 16 MURDER OF TWO JUDGES IN BELFAST

1. THE GUNNING DOWN OF TWO NORTHERN IRELAND JUDGES AT THEIR HOMES EARLY YESTERDAY MORNING WAS QUICKLY AND PUBLICLY CONDEMNED BY IRISH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, AND POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS AS ONE OF THE MOST APPALLING ACTS COMMITTED SINCE THE TROUBLES BEGAN. GOI PRIME MINISTER COSGRAVE EXPRESSED "SHOCK AND REVULSION AT THESE FOUL MURDERS" AND OFFERED HIS CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILIES OF THE DECEASED. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION LYNCH REFERRED TO THE INCIDENTS AS "COWARDLY AND SAVAGE" AND SAID THAT THE "MURDERS BRING CONTEMPT ON WHATEVER ORGANIZATION OR CAUSE THEY PURPORT TO SERVE." PARTICULARLY PROMINENT IRISH TV COVERAGE WAS GIVEN TO THE STATEMENT BY CATHOLIC BISHOP DALY OF DERRY, WHO SAID, "TO THINK THAT (THEY WERE) MURDERED BY AN ORGANIZATION THAT CLAIMS THAT IT HAS AS AN OBJECTIVE THE REUNIFICATION OF OUR COUNTRY IS IRONY INDEED. WE CAN ONLY HOPE THAT THIS NEW CRIME WILL BRING MORE PEOPLE TO REALIZE THAT THE PROVISIONAL IRA DOES NOT HAVE THE INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND AT HEART. WHATEVER MOTIVES THEY MAY HAVE HAD IN 1970 HAVE BECOME SMOTHERED IN A CAMPAIGN OF MURDER AND DESTRUCTION. IT IS A DISGRACE TO THEMSELVES AND TO THE IRISH PEOPLE AS A WHOLE."

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2. COMMENT: MOST INTERESTING COMMENT, HOWEVER, WAS MADE TO US

BY A DUBLIN PROFESSOR WHO IS CLOSE TO CURRENT GOVERNMENT. HE TOLD US HE WAS CONVICTED PROVOS HAD CARRIED OUT THIS ATROCITY BECAUSE THEY FEARED BRITISH MIGHT BE PLANNING TO END INTERNMENT. THERE HAS BEEN SOME RECENT PRESS SPECULATION TO THIS EFFECT, AND PROVOS MAY HAVE BELIEVED IT. THERE IS A WIDESPREAD BELIEF HERE THAT INTERNMENT IS AN ALBATROSS AROUND THE NECK OF THE BRITISH NI ADMINISTRATION. PROVOS, ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE BELIEVED TO WELCOME INTERNMENT AT THIS POINT AS THEIR MOST IMPORTANT REMAINING SOURCE OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT. ALTHOUGH IT MAY SEEM DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT PROVOS WANT TO RETAIN INTERNMENT, WHILE BRITISH AND IRISH MODERATES WANT TO END IT, OUR SOURCE HAS ALWAYS BEEN OBJECTIVE. RENDAHL

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